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LDF Media

media@naacpldf.org

LDF Condemns Use of FY26 NDAA to Advance Trump Administration's Anti-DEIA Agenda

Today, the U.S. Congress passed the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (FY26 NDAA), which includes sweeping provisions rolling back existing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives across the Department of Defense and prohibiting such initiatives in the future. The bill specifically eliminates or restricts programs designed to ensure fair recruitment, retention, training, and career advancement for all U.S. service members and civilians, as well as equity initiatives at the military academies and PK-12 schools operated by the Department. Congress passes the NDAA each year to set funding levels and policies for the Department of Defense.

The NDAA includes provisions that will make it substantially more likely that Black people and other people of color, women, LGBTQ+ people, and other groups will experience discrimination while serving in the military. The Legal Defense Fund is particularly concerned about the harm this will inflict on Black servicemembers looking to advance and move up the ranks in their careers.

In response to the bill's passage, **Demetria McCain, Director of Policy at the Legal Defense Fund**, issued the following statement:

"From the Buffalo Soldiers and the women of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion to the countless service members who broke barriers after U.S. armed forces were ordered to desegregate in 1948, Black people have repeatedly proven their valor in the face of entrenched discrimination. Equal protection programs in the armed forces were created to ensure any qualified person looking to serve their country could do so without fear of discrimination, and with access to the same opportunities to lead, advance, and succeed as anyone else.

"This administration's relentless and unnecessary targeting of equal protection programs is completely at odds with these goals and undermines our national security interests. Rolling back these critical safeguards in the FY26 NDAA not only disgraces the sacrifices of countless Black people who served with honor despite the barriers they faced but also severely undermines U.S. military readiness."

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Founded in 1940, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) is the nation's first civil rights law organization. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape

the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957 — although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.